AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please add or amend the claims to read as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A self-sharpening cutting tool comprising:

a cutting edge made of a first material, the cutting edge being coated only on one side thereof with a coating comprising tungsten carbide or mixtures of tungsten carbides, the coating substantially harder than the first material, wherein the coating has a layered or laminar microstructure aligned substantially parallel to the coated side of the cutting edge to enable wear or breaking off of micro-particles following the layered or laminar structure pattern.

2. (Currently Amended) A tool as claimed in claim 1, wherein the coating ~~comprises tungsten carbide or mixtures thereof,~~ is substantially or entirely free of metallic tungsten.

3. (Previously presented) A tool as claimed in claim 1, wherein the coating is a multilayered coating, with a topmost layer of the coating comprising tungsten carbide or mixtures thereof, substantially or entirely free of metallic tungsten.

4. (Previously presented) A tool as claimed in claim 1, wherein the coating is a multilayered coating comprising layers of varying hardness.

5. (Previously presented) A tool as claimed in claim 1, wherein the coating is a multilayered coating comprising layers of varying hardness, the hardest layer of which comprises tungsten carbide or mixtures thereof substantially or entirely free of metallic tungsten.

6. (Previously presented) A tool as claimed in claim 4, wherein the hardest layer is a topmost layer of the coating.

7. (Previously presented) A tool as claimed in claim 4, wherein the hardest layer is an intermediate layer of the coating.

8. (Previously presented) A tool as claimed in claim 4, wherein the hardest layer is a base layer of the coating.

9. (Previously presented) A tool as claimed in claim 4, wherein the coating comprises layers of tungsten, tungsten carbides and/or mixtures of tungsten with tungsten carbides alloyed with fluorine in amounts ranging from about 0.0005 to about 0.5 wt%.

10. (Previously presented) A tool as claimed in claim 4, wherein the coating comprises layers of tungsten and tungsten carbides substantially or entirely free of metallic tungsten, being alloyed with fluorine in amounts ranging from about 0.0005 to about 0.5 wt%.

11. (Previously presented) A tool as claimed in claim 4, wherein the coating has a base layer of tungsten.

12. (Previously presented) A tool as claimed in claim 3, wherein the layers are arranged in sequentially increasing hardness from the cutting edge to a topmost layer of the coating.

13. (Previously presented) A tool as claimed in claim 1, wherein the coating or a topmost layer thereof has a friction coefficient against WC/Co of no more than 0.3.

14. (Previously presented) A tool as claimed in claim 1, wherein the coating is produced by Vapour Deposition in a vacuum chamber at a pressure lower than atmospheric pressure and at a temperature above about 350°C.

15. (Previously presented) A tool as claimed in claim 1, wherein the coating has a total thickness from about 1 to about 25 micrometers.

16. (Previously presented) A tool as claimed in claim 1, wherein an exposed surface of the coating has a roughness of no more than about 0.8 Ra micrometers.

17. (Previously presented) A tool as claimed in claim 1, wherein the coating or a topmost layer thereof has a microhardness of at least about 2000kG/mm^2.

18. (Previously presented) A tool as claimed in claim 1, wherein an exposed surface of the coating is ground or polished in a direction substantially parallel to the coated surface of the cutting edge.

19. (Currently Amended) A method of manufacturing a self-sharpening cutting tool, the method comprising:

providing a cutting edge made of a first material or materials; and

coating only one side of the cutting edge with a coating comprising tungsten carbide or mixtures of tungsten carbides, the coating substantially harder than the first material or materials;

wherein the coating has a layered or laminar microstructure aligned substantially parallel to the coated side of the cutting edge to enable wear or breaking off of micro-particles following the layered or laminar structure pattern.

20. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 19, wherein the coating ~~comprises tungsten carbide or mixtures thereof,~~ is substantially or entirely free of metallic tungsten.

21. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 19, wherein the coating is a multilayered coating, the topmost layer of the coating comprising tungsten carbide or mixtures thereof, substantially or entirely free of metallic tungsten.

22. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 19, wherein the coating is a multilayered coating comprising layers of varying hardness.

23. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 19, wherein the coating is a multilayered coating comprising layers of varying hardness, the hardest layer of which comprises tungsten carbide or mixtures thereof, substantially or entirely free of metallic tungsten.

24. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 22, wherein the hardest layer is a topmost layer of the coating.

25. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 22, wherein the hardest layer is an intermediate layer of the coating.

26. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 22, wherein the hardest layer is a base layer of the coating.

27. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 22, wherein the coating comprises layers of tungsten, tungsten carbides or mixtures thereof, alloyed with fluorine in amounts ranging from about 0.0005 to about 0.5 wt%.

28. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 22, wherein the coating comprises layers of tungsten and tungsten carbides substantially or entirely free of metallic tungsten, being alloyed with fluorine in amounts ranging from about 0.0005 to about 0.5 wt%.

29. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 22, wherein the coating has a base layer of tungsten.

30. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 21, wherein the layers are arranged in sequentially increasing order of hardness from the cutting edge to a topmost layer of the coating.

31. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 19, wherein the coating or a topmost layer thereof has a friction coefficient against WC/Co of no more than 0.3.

32. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 19, wherein the coating is applied by Chemical Vapour Deposition in a vacuum chamber at a pressure lower than atmospheric pressure and at a temperature of no less than about 350°C.

33. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 19, wherein the coating is applied to a total thickness from about 1 to about 25 micrometers.

34. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 19, wherein an exposed surface of the coating after application has a roughness Ra of no more than about 0.8 micrometer.

35. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 19, wherein the coating or a topmost layer thereof has a microhardness of at least about 2000kG/mm^2.

36. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 19, wherein an exposed surface of the coating, after application of the coating, is ground or polished in a direction substantially parallel to the coated surface of the cutting edge.

37. (Previously presented) A tool as claimed in claim 1, wherein the coating is produced by Chemical Vapour Deposition in a vacuum chamber at a pressure lower than atmospheric pressure and at a temperature from about 450 to about 550°C.

38. (Previously presented) A tool as claimed in claim 1, wherein the coating has a total thickness of about 3 to about 12 micrometers.

39. (Previously presented) A tool as claimed in claim 1, wherein an exposed surface of the coating has a roughness Ra of about 0.5 microns or less.

40. (Previously presented) A tool as claimed in claim 1, wherein the coating or a topmost layer thereof has a microhardness of at least 2500kG/mm^2.

41. (Previously presented) A tool as claimed in claim 1, wherein the coating or a topmost layer thereof has a microhardness of at least 2900kG/mm^2.

42. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 19, wherein the coating is applied by Chemical Vapour Deposition in a vacuum chamber at a pressure lower than atmospheric pressure and at a temperature from about 450 to about 550°C.

43. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 19, wherein the coating is applied to a total thickness from about 3 to about 12 micrometers.

44. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 19, wherein an exposed surface of the coating after application has a roughness Ra of no more than 0.5 micrometers.

45. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 19, wherein the coating or a topmost layer thereof has a microhardness of at least 2500kG/mm^2.

46. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 19, wherein the coating or a topmost layer thereof has a microhardness of at least 2900kG/mm^2.